



# HOW TO PREPARE A RESUME/COVER LETTER



## Purpose

A resume has one purpose, and that is to get you an interview. Because prospective employers receive and review hundreds of resumes, resumes must do their job quickly. It is important to have organized thoughts and to present all pertinent information.

## Preparation

Decide how you want to portray yourself and pick headings accordingly. Gather facts, addresses, dates and titles, and begin a rough draft by breaking your resume into sections such as the following:

### Education

List the highest level of education you have achieved. Also list any degree titles and years obtained. If you have attended any seminars related to the job for which you are applying, you may want to list them here as well. Normally education is listed first on a resume, especially if it is your strongest asset. However, if you have an excessive amount of experience and little education you may want to list education second.

### Experience

The experience section can include full and/or part time jobs as well as volunteer work. Internships would also be listed here. Be sure to note beginning and ending dates of employment including the month and year, the name and address of your employer, the position or title held, and the duties you performed. Be specific and detailed in your descriptions.

### Functional Format

There are two ways you can organize your experience. You may want to group your experiences and list tasks you have performed under headings such as management or leadership, research, and computers, etc. This is called a functional format and is most effective when you are changing career fields and want to highlight transferable skills.

### Chronological Format

The most common format is chronological. Here you emphasize your work experience by listing each job you have held separately. Jobs should be listed in reverse chronological order (starting with your present or most recent job first).

No matter how you decide to highlight your relevant experience, you should always use action words. Current responsibilities or duties should be listed using present tense and duties of former jobs should be listed using past tense. Be sure to list your most important responsibilities or successes first and list similar tasks together.

### Special Skills

Computer skills, such as computer languages and software programs would fall under this category. You also want to list any foreign languages that you can read and write and/or speak. If applicable to the job for which you are applying, athletic skills could also be listed here.

### Honors

Awards and special recognition are always impressive. List any academic awards you have received, as well as any professional awards. You should also list honors in reverse chronological order, being sure to include titles and dates.

### Activities or Professional Affiliations

This is the section where you may want to give a prospective employer the chance to get to know you a little better. If you are a member of a professional or community organization you should list it here. Be sure to include any offices you have held. Listing any extra curricular activities and hobbies would also be appropriate under this heading. A willingness to travel or relocate would also be appropriate in this category.

### Format and Presentation

Evaluate your resume. How does it look?

Fancy fonts, bold and italics can all make a statement, but don't make your resume "look busy". Pick a font and stick with it, (use 2 different type styles at most). Use bold or italics for headings or job titles only. Make sure you have enough white space, left margins are even and consistent, and that information is not crowded on the page. Printing should be on one side of the page only.

Your name should be at the top of the page, and should stand out. Also include your complete address (including state and zip code), and phone number as well as any email addresses you use. If your resume is more than one page, you should include your name at the top of each page.

It is not necessary to list references on a resume or to state that they are "available upon request". However, you may want to assemble a list of professional and personal references. Be sure to include complete name, title, company name and address, and phone number for each individual listed. If references are requested, you can present this information after your interview.

### Pulling It All Together

Once you have completed your draft, review, review, review. Have your family, friends, an advisor or counselor, or someone in your field review and critique your resume. Keep in mind that people have differing opinions, use your own judgment about making suggested changes and be open minded about accepting constructive criticism.

Use a computer to prepare your resume. If you choose to use color or borders, make sure they are professional and appropriate to your field. If you don't have access to a computer, consider having your resume professionally printed/reproduced. Resumes should be printed on white or off white, size 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper.

Finally, make sure there are no typos or spelling errors. Not only does this make for a more professional resume it also shows an eye for detail.

### **Cover Letters**

A cover letter is normally only one page long. The letter should indicate your interest in a particular position or company, therefore it is not effective to use a "generic" cover letter. The letter should also briefly summarize your most relevant experiences and achievements to the job for which you are applying. Finally it lets the employer know when and where you can be reached for interview scheduling purposes.

Use a standard business greeting such as "Dear Sir/Madame" to open your letter. If a contact person was listed in the advertisement, address your letter accordingly. Indicate the particular job for which you are applying, using the exact title as it was advertised. Close your letter with "Sincerely" or "Sincerely yours". Use your original signature not a signature stamp on your letter and type your name under your signature. Also, be sure to include your complete mailing address and or phone number including area code for contact purposes.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **Motor Vehicle Administration**

MDOT WEBSITE

[www.maryladntransportation.com](http://www.maryladntransportation.com)

MVA JOB LINE

410-424-3135

MDOT INTEREST FILE

410-865-1073

For more information, including the information found in this brochure, please check the following resources:

<http://academic.bellevue.edu/~career-coverlet3.htm>

<http://www.rileguide.com/cover.html>

<http://www.rileguide.com/letters.html>

[www.jobweb.com/resumes\\_interviews/default.htm](http://www.jobweb.com/resumes_interviews/default.htm)

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/#sub2>

<http://www.questcareer.com/tips.htm>

## **HOW TO PREPARE A RESUME AND COVER LETTER**

### **Motor Vehicle Administration**



Human Resources  
6601 Ritchie Highway NE, Room 101  
Glen Burnie, MD 21062